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Student Officer:
Yavuz Erol Gönen

Issue:
The question of the Indonesian national revolution

Forum:
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Introduction

After the invention of the steam engine and thence the start of Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century, European nations were quick to comprehend the importance of natural commodities and resources as fuels to run the engines that were used for mass production; however, as the Industrial Revolution progressed, European Nations were left with a large number of excess products and budget. This excess was the primary reason for the shift in the term colonialism. Colonialism was an economic policy that economically strong countries executed on unadvanced and depressed countries with the objective of exploiting their raw material stock in order to use the gathered raw material in factories for mass production. Yet, with the progression of Industrial Revolution, colonialism shifted to imperialism which is an advanced form of colonialism that included extra steps such as selling the machined raw materials back to the country where raw materials were initially gathered for cheap prices and vitiating the citizens of that nation in order to completely shift a nation into the raw material market of an economically advanced and industrialized nation. Imperialism, as a concept, is crucial for the question of the Indonesian Revolution due to it resulting from a strong opposition to the actions of the imperialist forces of the Dutch on the lands of Indonesia. After the collapse of the Mataram Empire, Javanese Hindu–Buddhist kingdom, in 1755, Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) - Dutch United East India Company - established itself as the politically and economically dominant force in the Java island. There are two significant figures in the colonization of Indonesia: Herman Willem Daendels, Governor-General from 1808 to 1811 during the French occupation of Holland, and British Lieutenant Sir Stamford Raffles, Governor-General from 1811 to 1816 during the British occupation of Java. Daendels triggered the start of a century long colonial period in Indonesian lands by dividing the Indonesian territory into districts that were each governed by a European resident. These residents were responsible for a wide range of matters in their residency that varied from legal matters to even the organization of agriculture. Raffles, building upon the work of his precedent, was to expedite the vitiation in Indonesia by judicial, administrative, and police systems in the nation. Raffles also introduced a land tax which resulted in the Javanese peasants to pay approximately the value of two-fifths of their annual harvests as tax. The economy of Indonesia was mostly ruled by foreign Europeans, and the local citizens were observed to be struggling under harsh economical situations due to the economical restrictions applied to the Indonesians and the privileges given to the European tradesmen. The colonial Dutch system of dominance was both dualistic and direct. There was an indigenus hierarchy which functioned as an intermediary between the Javanese peasants and the Dutch hierarchy which consisted of the Javanese aristocracy, previously significant

government officials that ran the Mataram administration. Yet, the indigenous hierarchy had no voice in the ruling of Indonesia as it was obligated to execute the orders of the Dutch hierarchy.

In the course of mankind, history has been observed to be consisting of repetitions, and there were obvious indications of the Indonesian Revolution more than a century prior to it in the form of significant opposition to the governmental actions. When the Dutch authorities decided to build a road on the land of prince Diponegoro, they faced a strong opposition by the prince which was supported by the Javanese population. This incident quickly resulted in a war, jihad war, and it took place between 1825 and 1830, resulting in the death of approximately 215,000 people, mostly on Javanese side. After the catastrophic incident, the colonial Dutch forces were even more dominant and repressive on the Indonesian lands which signalled the start of a larger Indonesian opposition to colonialism, the Indonesian Revolution.

Definition of Key Terms

Colonialism

According to the definition of the National Geographic, colonialism is “control by one power over a dependent area or people.” It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people. By 1914, a large majority of the world's nations had been colonized by Europeans at some point.

Imperialism

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Imperialism is the policy, practice, or advocacy of extending the power and dominion of a nation especially by direct territorial acquisitions or by gaining indirect control over the political or economic life of other areas.

Nationalism

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups.

General Overview

In 1901, the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina made an announcement in her annual speech regarding the launch of a new policy as the borders of the Dutch Indies began to resemble present-day Indonesia. The new policy was the Ethical Policy, and it was established to raise the life standards of the native Indonesians. In order to achieve the motives of the Ethical Policy, the Dutch government directly intervened with the economic life, promoted under the slogan “irrigation, education, and emigration.” The policy, however, despite the good intention behind it, was later observed to be unsuccessful. There was an unexpected backlash of the Ethical Policy which was the awakening of Pan-Indonesian nationalism due to the policy providing Indonesians the intellectual tools to organize and articulate their objections to Dutch colonialism. The Ethical Policy triggered the Western political

ideas of freedom and democracy to reach and have significance in Indonesia; in fact, natives developed a national consciousness as 'Indonesians for the first time due to the teachings of the new educational reform started with the Ethical Policy. In 1908, the first native political society Budi Utomo was founded by students in Batavia, often regarded as the birth of Indonesian nationalism. The formation of this society started a new bureaucratic tradition in which the young Indonesian elite and the Dutch colonial authorities cooperated, giving the Indonesian community the first steps towards independence. Indonesian nationalism acquired a religious aspect in 1911 with the establishment of the first mass-based political party the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union). The party was initially started in order to combat the Chinese dominance in the local economy; however, the party expended its purpose as it popular political consciousness with subversive tendencies. Indigenous political thinking was strengthened with the establishment of Muhammadiyah in 1912, an Islamic reformist socio-religious movement, and the Indonesian Association of Social Democrats in 1914, a communist movement that spread Marxism. The spread of the Marxist ideals in Indonesia later resulted in the establishment of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1920. With the establishment of several nationalist political parties, the new Ethical Policy was observed to create much more controversy and conflicts than it was initially intended to.

At first, the Dutch government permitted the establishment of these political foundations; however, when the communist uprisings in West Java and West Sumatra in 1926 and 1927 took place, the Indonesian ideologies radicalized which resulted in a shift in the Dutch government's approach: A relative tolerant regime was replaced by a repressive one in which every suspected act of subversive behaviour was suppressed. The new oppressive governmental approach backlashed as the entire Indonesian nationalist movement was radicalized. As a result of the new oppressive regime, Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), the Indonesian Nationalist Party, was established in 1927 with the main objective of complete Indonesian independence. In the following year, in 1928, one of the most significant developments regarding Indonesian nationalism took place as Youth Pledge was decelerated. In the congress of youth organization, there were three ideals that were proclaimed: one motherland, one nation and one language. The main objective of the congress was to unify the young Indonesians for the pursuit of Indonesian independence. On the congress, the actions taken were significant for unity and the motive behind nationalism as Indonesia Raya, the future national anthem, was played and merah-putih, the future national flag, was shown for the first time. The dutch government was not hesitant to take actions against the Indonesian nationalism and reacted with suppression, similar to the reason behind the jihad war started in 1825. The imperialist Dutch government took significant steps to stop the development of the nationalist ideals, and arrested and exiled the national figures Soekarno, Indonesia's first president in 1945, and Mohammad Hatta, Indonesia's first vice president, who were both educated under the educational system created by the Ethical Policy of the Dutch.

The Dutch government was powerful enough to stop the nationalist movements in Indonesia by suppressing the nationalist and idealist organizations or arresting nationalist public figures and leaders; however, they were never fully capable of ending the nationalist ideals of the Indonesians. The Indonesians, on the other hand, lacked the resources and the political power to compete against the Dutch government on their own, so they aimed to seek outer help and form alliances in order to eliminate the imperialist forces from their land. Their seek for outer help was

answered by the Japanese government in the march of 1942 as the Japanese provided help by occupying the Dutch Indies; however, Japan's main objective in helping Indonesia was to make Indonesia a colony of its own due to its rich petrol sources. Although, the Japanese help was firstly welcomed by the Indonesians as liberators, their main objectives were soon to be observed from the hardship of the Japanese rule: forced labour under harsh conditions as well as scarcity of medicines, clothing, and food. Japan was able to acquire Indonesia from Netherlands due to Netherland's struggle against the Nazi Germany in during the World War II. Administrative incompetence of the Japanese rule turned Java into an island of hunger, and Indonesians worked as *romusha*, forced labourers, as they were forced to work on labour-intensive construction projects. When Indonesia was started to be ruled by the Japanese forces, the Dutch officials were thrown in internment camps and were replaced by Indonesians. Despite the oppressing governmental approach, the Japanese made a similar mistake to that of the Dutch: they trained, armed, and educated many young Indonesians and gave their nationalist leaders a political voice. This situation helped Indonesian youths to be prepared for an independent future for Indonesia. The actions towards Indonesian independence sped up as the end of World War II was approaching. As the Japanese government was doing poorly in the war, the Prime Minister Koiso promised independence for Indonesia, yet no date was set. In the final months before Japan's surrender, ending World War II, the Japanese government fully supported the Indonesian nationalist movement. After the catastrophic bombings of the United States of America in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, Japan was drastically affected economically and politically. With the Japanese on the brink of losing the war, the Dutch sought to reestablish their authority in Indonesia; the Japanese, however, were in favor of helping Indonesian nationalists prepare for self-government. As the Japanese government was getting weaker due to the harsh conditions of the war, pressure from radical and politicized *pemuda* (youth) groups increased, and under their pressure on August 17, 1945, two days after the Japanese Emperor's surrender in the Pacific, Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the Indonesian independence. In the following day, the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) declared Sukarno President, and Hatta Vice President of the newly formed independent Indonesian government. The European forces strongly opposed the Indonesian independence, and in September and October 1945, the ugly side of revolution surfaced with a series of incidents involving pro-Dutch Eurasians and atrocities committed by Indonesian mobs against European internees. Ferocious fighting erupted when 6,000 British Indian troops landed in the city. Following the killing of Mallaby on 30 October, the British sent more troops into the city from November 10. Although the European forces largely captured the city in three days, the poorly armed Republicans fought on for three weeks and thousands died as the population fled to the countryside. Despite the military defeat suffered by the Republicans and a loss of manpower and weaponry, the battle and defense mounted by the Indonesians galvanized the nation in support of independence and helped garner international attention. This was the heaviest battle fought for the Indonesian revolution, and as a result of the costly Indonesian victory, the European countries comprehended that Republic was not simply a gang of collaborators without popular support.

Major Parties Involved

Netherlands, under Schermerhorn Presidency

The Netherlands government had acted as an imperialist force in the Indonesian lands for more than a century, and it lost Indonesia as a raw-material market in the near past. Netherlands is under harsh economic conditions due to losing many of its colonies during World War II. The government wants to attain its previous political and economic superiority; however, it has understood that creating conflicts is not the correct way in the Battle of Surabaya. Due to this, in the year 1946, Netherlands' main objective is to reattain Indonesia through diplomacy.

Japan, under Prime Minister Kijūrō

In the year 1946, Japan is one of the countries that are in the worst economic situation due to the destruction caused by the nuclear attacks of the United States of America. Japan aims to re-attain its significant position amongst imperialist forces; however, it has no resources to achieve that goal through armed conflicts; thus, it leans towards diplomatic supremacy. Japan gives importance to the Indonesian independence, so it aims to restrict the imperialist forces in a way that allows Indonesian independence but also Japanese development.

Great Britain, under Prime Minister Attlee

Great Britain is the biggest imperialist force in the world as it has colonies all around the globe. The colonies are crucial for Great Britain because they provide the government with resources to survive under the harsh conditions of the post-war economy. Great Britain fears that the Indonesian independence might lead to the awakening of its colonies, causing more colonial conflicts. Great Britain extremely cautious towards its colonies in the year 1946, and the government aims to make the revolution fail through military or diplomacy in order to convey the irretrievable negative impacts of proclaiming independence from imperialist forces, such as itself. Great Britain is a lodestone regarding the issue of the future of imperialism as it is the biggest imperialist force in the world.

Indonesia, under Sukarno Presidency

Indonesia is the most significant country in the council as it had just recently proclaimed its independence and fought conflicts to establish its position as an independent country to the imperialist forces after it had been a colony for over a century. Sukarno presidency is extremely crucial for the development of Indonesia; the presidency aims to make the sources of income for the country to be completely nationalized and to improve the lifestyles of the citizens by providing better social services and education which has been lacking in Indonesia for centuries. Indonesia became a lodestone for the colonies around the world because its victory against imperialist forces gave courage to many oppressed nations to also become independent. After winning battles for its independence, the Indonesian government wants to protect it through diplomatic actions and improve its economy through nationalist actions. One of the main economical actions of the Sukarno presidency is the nationalisation of the process of raw material which gets strong opposition from imperialist forces and the United States of America.

United States of America, under Truman Presidency

United States of America, in the year 1946, is one of the most economically stable countries in the world due to its late involvement in World War II. The Truman presidency values the natural resources due to their significance in their rapidly growing industry. United States of America is one of the greatest oppositions against the Sukarno presidency and its nationalist movements. The Truman Presidency

doesn't want the natural resources of Indonesia to be nationalised; the government aims to use them for their own benefit. Due to this, the Truman Presidency aims to take down the Sukarno presidency.

Timeline of Key Events

N/A, 1755	The Fall of the Mataram Empire
The Year 1755	The Start of the Dutch Imperialism in Indonesia
Sept. 17 th 1901	Dutch Queen Wilhelmina announced the Ethical Policy
May 6 ^m 1908	The Foundation of the First Native Political Society Budi Utomo
N/A, 1911	The Establishment of Sarekat Islam
Nov. 18 th 1912	The Establishment of Muhammadiyah
May 23 rd 1914	The Establishment of the Indonesian Communist Party
Years 1917-18	The Communist Uprisings in West Java and West Sumatra resulting in the Shift in the Dutch Government's Approach
July. 4 th 1927	The Establishment of the Indonesian Nationalist Party
Oct. 28 th 1928	The Declaration of the Youth Pledge
Mar. - Sept. 6 th 1942	The Arrival of the Japanese Forces to Indonesia
Sep. 7 th 1944	the Prime Minister Koiso Promised Independence for Indonesia
Aug. 17 th 1945	The Proclamation of the Indonesian Independence.
Oct. 27 th 1945	The Start of the Battle of Surabaya
Nov. 20 th 1945	The End of the Battle of Surabaya

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Up until the year 1946, there have been many attempts to stop the Indonesian Revolution and to make Indonesia a colonised country again. These attempts were taken by mostly Western Imperialist forces such as the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain. The Dutch and the French aimed to re-attain their political strength in the lands of Indonesia through oppressing governmental officials; however, some

democratic and educational privileges given to the Indonesians caused the Indonesian public to take national actions towards the government, causing the downfall of the imperialist forces. Great Britain, on the other hand, resorted to a much more violent approach towards the Indonesian Revolution due to it being an example of independence for the colonies of Great Britain. One of the primary examples of Great Britain's violent approach towards Indonesian nationalists is the Battle of Surabaya which ended in a defeat for Great Britain. Japan has also taken significant actions towards the recolonization of Indonesia during Indonesia's fight for independence. Japan displayed itself as an ally and used that disguise to get into the territories of Indonesia in order to attain Indonesia's rich petrol sources; however, their attempt was offset by their excessive use of oppression that resulted in a nationalist movement against imperialism. Indonesia, on the other side, has used nationalism as the key ideology for their developing economy in order to avoid the abuses of imperialist forces and form an economically independent country.

Possible Solutions

There are two sides on the issue of Indonesian Revolution: the Imperialist forces that oppose the establishment of an independent Indonesia and the Indonesian government alongside colonised countries. For countries that oppose the Indonesian Revolution, one of the most effective ways to stop the development of Indonesia would be to take military actions since Indonesia is a newly formed country with extremely limited financial sources. However, these actions might end up in international controversies, so political or economic war would be more efficient. Since Indonesia aims to form a national economy, one of the most crucial elements to achieve that is to find international markets to be active in. If economically developed imperialist countries put an embargo on Indonesia, it could possibly result in the bankruptcy of the government. In addition, due to the Indonesian government being formed recently, the governmental base is open to corruption resulting from imperialist forces. If imperialist forces achieve to corrupt the government officials or to manipulate the public through media, then the imperialist forces might achieve to weaken the Indonesian government to the extent that it is recolonized, making a statement to the colonized nations regarding the dangers of proclaiming independence.

Indonesian government, on the other hand, must be aware of its significant position in the issue of the fight against imperialism. Indonesian government's first priority should be to strengthen its national economy; however, the government needs to make allies with some imperialist forces in order to secure its economic development from any form of economical attack between the imperialist forces and its national economy since the Indonesian government is not strong enough to compete against the imperialists. In addition, the Indonesian government should also make allies with colonised nations by using its significance in the issue of imperialism and support colonized nations to fight for their independence. This is a risky action to take since it can result in the imperialist forces to take violent or destructive actions towards the Indonesian government; however, if it is executed at a degree that the colonized nations are indirectly supported, then not only the imperialist forces will lose some of their colonies thence their economic and political power, but also the Indonesian government will be protected by the League of Nations as there will be

no sign of the Indonesian government taking direct actions against the European Nations.

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HMUN 2020

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